

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Gilpin's Falls

AND/OR COMMON

Gilpin's Falls Historic District

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER East side of Maryland Route 272, just north of Bay View,
at North East Creek

CITY, TOWN

Bay View

☒ VICINITY OF

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

Maryland

CODE

24

First

COUNTY

Cecil

CODE

015

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

☒ DISTRICT
☐ BUILDING(S)
☐ STRUCTURE
☐ SITE
☐ OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

☐ PUBLIC
☒ PRIVATE
☐ BOTH
PUBLIC ACQUISITION
☐ IN PROCESS
☒ BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

☒ OCCUPIED
☐ UNOCCUPIED
☐ WORK IN PROGRESS
ACCESSIBLE
☒ YES: RESTRICTED
☐ YES: UNRESTRICTED
☐ NO

PRESENT USE

☒ AGRICULTURE ☐ MUSEUM
☐ COMMERCIAL ☐ PARK
☐ EDUCATIONAL ☒ PRIVATE RESIDENCE
☐ ENTERTAINMENT ☐ RELIGIOUS
☐ GOVERNMENT ☐ SCIENTIFIC
☐ INDUSTRIAL ☐ TRANSPORTATION
☐ MILITARY ☐ OTHER

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Multiple -see continuation Sheet #1

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

VICINITY OF

STATE

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Clerk of the Circuit Court

STREET & NUMBER

Cecil County Courthouse

CITY, TOWN

Elkton

STATE

Maryland 21921

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

☐ FEDERAL ☐ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☐ LOCAL

CITY, TOWN

STATE

CE-1294

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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Gilpin's Falls
Cecil County
Maryland

CONTINUATION SHEET . ITEM NUMBER 4 PAGE 1

(PROPERTY OWNERS LIST)

State Highway Administration
Office of Real Estate
501 St. Paul Place
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

ATTENTION: Mr. Calvin W. Reese, Director

Mr. and Mrs. James O'Connor
Bay View
North East, Maryland 21901

Dr. Lucien Maury
c/o William Kemp
141 East Main Street
Elkton, Maryland 21921

Mr. and Mrs. Paul Shirk
Bayview, Maryland 21901

Cecil County Community College
Bay View
North East, Maryland 21901

7 DESCRIPTION

CE-1294

CONDITION

— EXCELLENT
☒ GOOD
— FAIR

— DETERIORATED
☒ RUINS
— UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

— UNALTERED
☒ ALTERED

CHECK ONE

☒ ORIGINAL SITE
— MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Gilpin's Falls Historic District is a 28.8 acre tract located along North East Creek just south of Maryland Route 272, 1,200 feet north of Bayview in Cecil County, Maryland. The boundaries are Route 272 on the northwest and the northeast, and on the southwest, property lines of the properties 1,700 feet down the creek.

The focal point of the district is Gilpin's Falls, created where the North East Creek makes a 106 foot drop in a distance of about 2,000 feet. The water cascades over mammoth boulders of meta-rhyolite and igneous rock unique to this area and Cecil County.¹ Volcanic material that has crystalized is also present. The brute force exerted by this fall has been noticed and harnessed by industrial entrepreneurs since the mid-18th century. None of the structures connected with their ventures has remained standing, but there are ruins of several mills and mill races along the creek banks and a holding pond at the foot of the district.

Prehistoric occupation has been associated with this area by many local historians, but this has yet to be fully documented. Historical activity began in Gilpin's Falls with the presence of a saw mill built by Joseph Carter and sold to Samuel Gilpin in 1735. Along the falls are a dam breast, pipelines, faces, and foundations of earlier structures, some of which may date from the 18th century.

Located at the bottom of the district are the partially standing walls of the Johnson Woolen Mill that operated in the mid-19th century. A holding pond was made to divert water through a race that led to the woolen mill. The race course, both above and below ground, is intact and is an excellent example of dry laid fieldstone construction. The race leaves the mill and empties into the creek. A dry laid stone wall extends down the river for about 50 feet to prevent erosion. Other smaller structural foundations can be found in the area, including barn walls, stone fences, and a spring house site.

The three standing structures at Gilpin's Falls all date from the 19th century. The most visible is the covered bridge that connected Old Nottingham Road and North East in the mid-19th century. Built in 1859 by George Johnson, the bridge was restored in 1958-59 after a storm destroyed its exterior siding, roof, and floor.² The original framework, which spans 119 feet, is supported by Burr trusses. The framing members are mortised and tenoned and remain intact. The exterior of the shed is very plain; the only details are the windows along the sides of the bridge. The board walls don't reach all the way up to the roof, allowing light into the bridge.

The old road continues south from the bridge for about 100 yards. Facing this is the Johnson house, built circa 1877-1900. The house, on a northeast/southwest axis with the main facade facing northwest, has elaborate Eastlake details uncommon in this rural area. It is a 2½-story frame structure, three bays wide and one room deep with a two-story frame wing on the rear giving it a T-shape. Covered with cedar boards, the house sits on an uncoursed stone basement. Single story porches span both the south side of the wing and the front of the house. A single story addition is located on the north side of the wing. The roof is steeply pitched with overhanging eaves and is sheathed with the original patterned slate. A central gable on the front of the house

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #2.

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(DESCRIPTION, continued)

contains a double window, each with a 16/1 sash. This and the gables at the ends are covered with diamond-shaped shingles which continue under the eaves; the bottom of the shingled areas has a kick to it. There are stretcher bond brick chimneys in each gable end. The front has a double door centrally located that opens onto a very elaborate porch. The Eastlake details of the latter were supposedly shipped from Baltimore. A central pediment in the porch roof emphasizes the entrance steps and continues the sun burst pattern of the latticework hanging from the eaves of the porch roof. The porch railing has turned balusters above a cut-out circle design; the porch posts are also turned. The windows on this facade and those on each end of this section have 1/1 sash and plain surrounds with lintels extended into two steps. On the peak of the roof are five or six iron lightning rods with porcelain balls.

The interior of the house originally had a central hall with a single room on each side. In recent years one partition wall has been removed, incorporating the hall into the south parlor. The original stair is intact and has a column-like newel with fluted and roundel decorations and a ball on top; the balusters are turned. The door and window surrounds have a widely spaced fluted decoration with a roundel in each corner. The original wooden Victorian mantels remain in each front room: the mantel shelf is supported on each side by two elongated brackets with roundel and then two smaller reverse brackets below; there is a stylized, foliated decoration in the frieze with a dentil-like row above.

The outbuildings that remain with the Johnson house also date from the late 19th century. The carriage house, two stories high with a single carriage bay, is of board and batten construction with a slate roof. The barn, which has been moved from its original site on the same property, is of the same construction.

The third standing building is a house north of the covered bridge. It is a mid-19th century structure of uncoursed fieldstone with rough quoins and stands on a small knoll overlooking the falls. It has a northeast/southwest orientation, and the main facade faces southeast. References to a log structure found in A Geographical Description of the States in Maryland and Delaware of 1807 may possibly be to this site which Joseph Scott mentioned was near the falls.³ The present stone structure is two bays wide by one room deep and two stories high. The medium-pitched gable roof is covered with wood shingles. A small common bond brick chimney is located in the northeast gable end. The boxed cornice is of recent construction. The fenestration of 6/6 sash windows is symmetrical on the main facade with the entrance in the southeast bay. A small hood has been placed over the main door; the window surrounds are plain. There are no windows in the gable ends of the house. Three dates are etched into several of the quoins on the main facade. The years 1732, 1844, and 1942 all appear, but 1844 is the only likely date for construction of the existing structure. The date 1732 is probably when the land was first settled by the Gilpin family, and 1942 may date one of the small

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #3.

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ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 3

(DESCRIPTION, continued)

additions on the rear. The frame addition, probably built in the late 19th or early 20th century, has since been remodeled with casement windows added. The interior of the main house is quite plain, with finely beaded vertical boards sheathing the walls. A corner stair is located in the northeast end next to the chimney stack.

In 1895 William Warburton purchased several properties around the falls in order to fulfill a life-long ambition: to construct a hydro-electric plant. In July of 1905 Frederick Shoff of Colmanville, Pennsylvania was awarded the contract to build the power house, abutments, race walls, etc.⁵ According to the Cecil County News, 75 men were employed in the construction. The remains of these ventures are spotted around the beginnings of the falls.

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The primary asset of the Gilpin's Falls area is its natural setting, unique in Cecil County. The dramatic change in elevation occurring here is emphasized by the Big North East Creek as it falls over and around ancient rock formations.¹ The Falls is surrounded by many beech, oak, and poplar trees. The roughness of the terrain both attracted 18th and 19th century industry and repelled 20th century development, preserving the ruins of this industrial development.

Of the three standing structures, two are worthy of individual National Register recognition: the Johnson house and the covered bridge. The former is a fine Victorian structure with Eastlake detail, the latter uncommon in this area. The bridge, one of only six covered bridges remaining in Maryland retains its original supporting members and is one of the few for which a date and builder are known.

The site was occupied in prehistoric times as indicated by artifacts found here. Modest professional work was done here, but findings were slim, perhaps because the rocks have been combed for years by amateurs who have made off with much material.

The historic activity on this site originated with the settlement of Joseph Carter about 1726. Carter sold his lands, along with several houses and a saw mill, to Samuel Gilpin and Edward Taylor.² At that time the land was called Kinsbey. Soon after this purchase Gilpin bought nearby properties, which included the tracts known as Stoney Chse, Coxes Park, and Rumsey's Ramble. The recording date of these sales is 1735, but one of the documents shows that Gilpin was in the county by 1732.

Samuel Gilpin was a yeoman farmer and a distant relative of the Washington family. In addition to being involved in agricultural pursuits, he was also in the milling business. Although there was already a saw mill at the Falls, by 1742 Gilpin had enlarged the earlier mill to include a corn mill, half-owned by Henry Backer.³ Prior to 1767 he was also engaged in the manufacture of oil from menhaden. His diverse interests might have included blacksmithing, for in 1755 he bought a large pair of "Smith's bellows" from Joseph Richards.⁴

Samuel Gilpin was a Quaker and attended East Nottingham Meeting in nearby Calvert, Maryland. After his death in 1767, his properties were owned by his two sons, Samuel and Joseph. Both these men were prosperous and participated in the American Revolution. In 1778 Joseph served as a justice for the swearing of the oaths of allegiance to the new government.⁵ Both brothers are listed as taking the oath, and Samuel became a captain in the local militia. Samuel also was a wheat purchaser for the Continental Army, whose main supply depot during part of the war was Elkton.⁶

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #4.

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(SIGNIFICANCE, continued)

The mill property, which stayed in the family, must have been fairly prosperous, for during this period two licenses for tavern-keepers at Gilpin's Falls were issued. Through marriage and inheritance the property passed into the hands of the Partridge family. Apparently the old mill either needed repair or had burned down, for in 1844 John Partridge built a new grist and saw mill and for awhile contemplated building a woolen mill.⁷ Partridge was very interested in water power and estimated that there was a 156-foot fall in 410 yards at the Falls. In an undated clipping the property was advertised by Gilpin and Stephens as having, "a 75 foot fall within 190 yards equal to 180 horsepower".⁸

The Martenet Map of 1858 shows that a J. Matthews was operating the grist and saw mill.⁹ Three years later John Cooper bought "all that tract of lands and mills" for \$7,950.¹⁰ The Cooper family kept the property until the late 19th century. In 1895 William Warburton, a local resident whose family owned a mill on the Little North East Creek, purchased the properties surrounding the Falls. Warburton was a prosperous attorney of many interests. He served as a delegate to the Republican National Convention in 1888. He later became president of the 2nd National Bank of Elkton.¹¹ One of his chief curiosities was hydroelectric power. When he purchased the Falls, he had already decided to convert at least part of the site to a power plant. By 1905 he accomplished his goal. The company known as the Elkton Electric Light and Power Company operated until 1926, and eventually supplied electricity to a large part of Cecil County. The plant was manned by Edgar Renn and William Booth.¹²

At the turn of the century and during the early 20th century, the Falls was a favorite area to picnic and take a Sunday outing. The boardwalk which descended down the east bank was used by young and old alike to view the water and rocks. About 1930 the plant was closed after purchase by the Conowingo Power Company.

Today the Falls remains virtually the same as it was in the late 19th century, without the mills. Local preservationists are pondering a move which would allow the county to purchase the Falls to insure the preservation of this site. The potential that exists here for possible recreational, educational, and other purposes is great.

¹William Bullock Clark (EDIT) Maryland Geological Survey, Cecil County. (Balt.: John Hopkins Press, 1907), p. 99.

²Cecil County Land Records, Elkton, Maryland: Deed JS5/138.

³Ibid, JS6/231.

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(SIGNIFICANCE, continued)

⁴Ibid., JS9/61.

⁵Cecil County Historical Society "Oaths of Allegiance" A list for the Revolutionary War.

⁶Cecil County Historical Society - Gilpin Family File - unauthored information (see also Maryland Archives).

⁷John McGrain, Molinography of Maryland: A Tabulation of Mills, Furnaces, and Primitive Industries (unpublished). Also see Partridge Papers; Maryland Historical Society, p. 642.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Simon Martenet, Martenet's Map of Cecil County, Maryland (Philadelphia: R.L. Barnes, 1858).

¹⁰Cecil County Land Records, Elkton, Maryland. WHR 4/40.

¹¹Portrait and Biographical Record of Harford and Cecil Counties. (New York: Chapman Publishing Co., 1897), pp. 369-70.

¹²Miss Estelle Wood; Private Interview, March 2, 1977, North East, Maryland.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #6.

CE-1294

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 28.8 acres

QUADRANGLE NAME _____

UTM REFERENCES

A	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C			
E			
G			

QUADRANGLE SCALE _____

B	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
D			
F			
H			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION _____

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

George Lutz III; Paul B. Touart

ORGANIZATION

Cecil County Committee of the Maryland Historical Trust

STREET & NUMBER

DATE

August, 1978

Room 1, Cecil County Courthouse

CITY OR TOWN

TELEPHONE

(301) 398-7568

Elkton

STATE

Maryland 21921

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL _____

STATE _____

LOCAL _____

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST:

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

DATE

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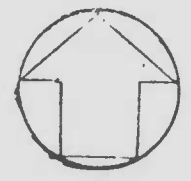
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0-5-78
EXP. VIEW, A/D
GARDEN FALLS

CE-17294



SCALE 1" = 600'
HISTORIC DISTRICT
28.8 ACRES

